

Each year the FWEA bestows Public Education Awards for most worthy Programs, Organizations and Individuals. This year's awardees exemplify the use of best practices and personal dedication in getting the message out to the masses—those who benefit the most from a healthy, sustainable water environment. Congratulations to our honorees. These award-winning efforts challenge us all to enlighten the public and inspire communal support of our water environment agendas.

— John A. Giachino, FWEA Director-at-Large

Tip Sheet 37: FWEA Public Education Awards



Julie Karleskint

Individual Category: Julie Karleskint

Julie Karleskint was selected as the 2008 award recipient in the Individual Category. A senior associate with the consulting engineering firm Hazen and Sawyer, she has managed the firm's Sarasota office since 2006.

Karleskint has been a Professional Engineer in Florida since 1989. She serves on the Public Education Committee for both the FWEA and the Water Environment Federation (WEF), and currently serves as subcommittee chair for WEFTEACH 2009 and the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. She is also on the national WEFTEACH subcommittee and served as chair of this subcommittee for five years.

Karleskint has also been active in her community promoting public education. Among the endeavors that earned her the 2008 Individual Category Award are:

- She has participated in WEFTEACH every

year since its inception in 1994.

- She coordinated a teachers workshop with the Florida Water Resources Conference from 1997 to 2000.
- She coordinated the "Adopt-A-School" Program from 1993 to 2000, providing water environment curriculum materials to over 20 school districts throughout Florida.
- She has served as science fair judge for Sarasota County for past 10 years.
- Assisted in judging the Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition at the local, state and national levels.
- She has provided tours of water and wastewater treatment facilities for students and teachers to enhance their understanding of water and wastewater industry.
- She exhibited FWEA and WEF educational material at the Florida Association of Science Teachers conference.
- She presented a workshop on Water Sourcebook materials at the FAST conference.
- She served as a judge for the annual FWEA Student Design Competition in 2001.

Organization Category: Seminole County Environmental Services

Earning the Organization Category Award for its numerous public education programs is Seminole County Environmental Services. The agency's program includes over 500 irrigation evaluations conducted within the county that have saved 88 million gallons of water per year, along with over 200 rain sensors installed.

The agency also wrote over 3,000 letters to high-volume water users, conducted over 50 outreach events, ran seven public-service education programs on Seminole County Television, got a water conservation ordinance approved, and developed a new inverse block water conservation rate structure. Other projects include:

- Constructing a water conservation demonstration garden.
- Creating water conservation messages for the back of utility bills.
- Setting up a water conservation speakers bureau.

- Conducting water conservation enforcement training with over 50 staff members to create an active enforcement team.
- Placing water conservation bookmarks in all county libraries.
- Creating a showerhead exchange program.
- Developing a new customer water savings kit.
- Developing a Water Wise resource program for over 300 school children and their parents to audit their home water consumption, along with a retro kit to make home improvements. A follow-up audit would be conducted several months after the retro kit was installed.

The agency's future plans include once-a-week irrigation during droughts and an updated rate analysis to confirm the effectiveness of the current block rate structure. Also, Seminole County plans to pilot innovative water conservation technologies such as intelligent irrigation systems; create demonstration projects with businesses, schools, and other organizations; and provide commercial audits and possibly offer rebates with those audits.



Debra Mienert, manager of Seminole County's public education program, accepts the Organization Category Award.